



Bachelor of Fine Arts in Performing Arts [Alumni] Program Overview and Course Descriptions

AMDA's Bachelor of Fine Arts in Performing Arts is designed for the student who wants to explore a variety of performance areas. Early semesters will provide foundation work in Acting, Musical Theatre, Singing, Dance, Improv, and Stage Combat. Future semesters will offer the opportunity to build a curriculum that will provide an enhanced experience within given performance areas, while still continuing to build upon a broad-based foundation. Critical Studies courses provide academic coursework designed specifically for the performing artist, where every class is immediately relevant to the life of a working dancer, actor, and/or singer. Advanced courses focus on career preparation, industry networking, and audition techniques. Senior courses in entrepreneurship will allow students to create performance opportunities, build business plans and explore the role of the producer. The overall program is designed to ultimately enable the graduate to successfully compete within the ever-changing demands of the Entertainment Industry.

YEAR THREE

Fifth Semester

English Composition for the Actor
Critical Studies: English 3 credits

Kinetic Anatomy for the Actor
Critical Studies: Science/Tech 3 credits

Theatre Roots
Critical Studies: Theatre Roots 3 credits

Masterpieces of Drama
Great Playwrights & Great Composers
World Theatre

Performance Immersion Courses
Performance Immersion 6 credits

Sixth Semester

Creative Writing
Critical Studies: English 3 credits

Creative Exploration
Critical Studies: Creative Exploration 3 credits

Cultural Diversity in the Arts
Surrealism in the Arts
History of Cinema 1

Performance Immersion Courses
Performance Immersion 9 credits

YEAR FOUR

Seventh Semester

Entrepreneurship in the Arts
Critical Studies: Creative Exploration 3 credits

Playwriting/Screenwriting
Critical Studies: English 3 credits

Theatre Roots
Critical Studies: Theatre Roots 3 credits

Performance Immersion Courses
Performance Immersion 6 credits

Eighth Semester

Theatre Roots
Critical Studies: Theatre Roots 3 credits

Creative Exploration
Critical Studies: Creative Exploration 3 credits

Slam Poetry Workshop
Gender in the Performing Arts
History of Cinema 2

Industry & Networking: Career Preparation
Performance Immersion 2 credits

Performance Immersion Courses
Performance Immersion 7 credits

Bachelor of Fine Arts in Performing Arts [Alumni]

Fifth Semester

English Composition for the Actor
(Critical Studies: English) 3 credits

Balancing the requirements of standard written English with subject matter that is relevant to the performing artist, this course will help students achieve confidence and competency in the areas of effective writing: a focused and unified thesis, compelling content and supporting details, a variety of rhetorical and organizational modes, grammar and mechanics, and accepted formats and documentation.

Kinetic Anatomy for the Actor
(Critical Studies: Science/Tech) 3 credits

Students will gain a fundamental knowledge and understanding of human skeletal and muscular anatomy, as well as basic concepts of biomechanical balance, momentum, and leverage. These lessons will be complimented by a movement "lab" where students will apply their anatomical knowledge to develop a "physical vocabulary" in order to refine their Characterization skills and help them be more safe, efficient, and effective in the physical aspects of their performances.

Theatre Roots

(Critical Studies: Theatre Roots) 3 credits

All Theatre Roots courses are humanities courses geared towards providing an artistic, intellectual, historical, sociopolitical, and overall cultural context for the major playwrights, traditions, and thematic areas of theatre and the performing arts. These interdisciplinary classes will combine theatre history, literature, philosophy, art history, and even scientific theories to help illuminate significant dramatists and works. These courses are divided into three categories, at least two of which will be offered each semester:

Masterpieces of Drama: Introductory surveys of a significant period or style of drama.

Great Playwrights & Great Composers: In-depth focus upon important playwrights and composers.

World Theatre: Studies of global theatrical and performing arts traditions.

Courses will vary each semester. Please see course catalog for a complete list of Theatre Roots course offerings and descriptions.

Performance Immersion Courses
(Performance Immersion) 6 credits

Choose 6 total credits. Courses will vary each semester. Please see eighth semester for a sample list of Performance Immersion course offerings and descriptions.

Sixth Semester

Creative Writing
(Critical Studies: English) 3 credits

This course offers to the performing artist a dynamic creative writing workshop. Study will include reading and analysis of some of the most inspired creative works. Focus will be given to comparing the fundamental structure of various writing forms, such as the short story, one-act play and screenplay.

Creative Exploration
(Critical Studies: Creative Exploration) 3 credits

Courses will vary each semester. Please see course catalog for a complete list of Creative Exploration course offerings and descriptions. Choices may include:

Cultural Diversity in the Arts – A course exploring issues of race, gender, ethnic and cultural identities as expressed within diverse theatrical and cinematic forms.

Surrealism in the Arts – This course examines works of art, literature, theatre, and film from the late 1800's through today that deal directly with dreams and hallucinations. This course also examines surrealist and dream texts from a cultural and historical perspective, presenting the various cultural differences and viewpoints associated with surrealist and dream texts. This course examines these cultural and historical underpinnings in order to grasp the nature of dreams from a larger global and historical perspective.

History of Cinema 1 – This course (and its companion, History of Cinema 2) will explore the development of cinema from its beginnings in the late 19th century to the present. Emphasis is placed on major directors, films, and movements that contributed to the development of cinema.

**Performance Immersion Courses
(Performance Immersion) 9 credits**

Choose 9 total credits. Courses will vary each semester. Please see eighth semester for a sample list of Performance Immersion course offerings and descriptions.

Seventh Semester

**Entrepreneurship in the Arts
(Critical Studies: Creative Exploration) 3 credits**

The purpose of this course is to help each student achieve an individualized understanding of "entrepreneurship" and the creation of new artistic ventures and to allow each student an opportunity to envision a career in (or related to) the arts based upon their own creative and professional interests.

**Playwriting/Screenwriting
(Critical Studies: English) 3 credits**

This course is designed to explore the fundamentals of Playwriting and Screenwriting while allowing students to develop their skills in creating compelling characters, dialogue and plot. This course will survey the basic elements of dramatic structure, and the parallels and differences between the two art forms, playwriting and screenwriting.

**Theatre Roots
(Critical Studies: Theatre Roots) 3 credits**

Courses will vary each semester. Please see course catalog for a complete list of Theatre Roots course offerings and descriptions.

**Performance Immersion Courses
(Performance Immersion) 6 credits**

Choose 6 total credits. Courses will vary each semester. Please see eighth semester for a sample list of Performance Immersion course offerings and descriptions.

Eighth Semester

**Theatre Roots
(Critical Studies: Theatre Roots) 3 credits**

Courses will vary each semester. Please see course catalog for a complete list of Theatre Roots course offerings and descriptions.

**Creative Exploration
(Critical Studies: Creative Exploration) 3 credits**

Courses will vary each semester. Please see course catalog for a complete list of Creative Exploration course offerings and descriptions. Choices may include:

Slam Poetry Workshop – Over the course of this writing workshop, students will learn how to create spoken word poems and monologues intended for public performance. Poets studied will include Daniel Beaty, Saul Williams, Maggie Estep, Mayda del Valle, Gina Loring, and Suheir Hammad. The workshop will culminate in students performing their own poems at AMDA's Late-Night Poetry Slam.

Gender in the Performing Arts – The seminar explores the distinctions and complex relationships among the concepts of sex, gender, and sexuality in relation to the performing arts. It will take a cultural studies approach informed by feminist, gender, and queer theories.

History of Cinema 2 – This course (and its companion, History of Cinema 1) will explore the development of cinema from its beginnings in the late 19th century to the present. Emphasis is placed on major directors, films, and movements that contributed to the development of cinema.

**Industry & Networking: Career Preparation
(Performance Immersion) 2 credits**

This course provides valuable information regarding agents, casting directors and the practical business aspects of a career in the performing arts. Interviews, auditions, pictures/resumes, mailings, and similar professional responsibilities are included. 50% of credit hours assigned to this course will be acquired through out-of-class room assignments which are designed to introduce the students to industry professionals and establish contacts.

**Performance Immersion Courses
(Performance Immersion) 7 credits**

Choose 7 total credits. Courses will vary each semester. A sample list of Performance Immersion course offerings and descriptions are listed here:

Performance Immersion Electives

Courses will vary each semester. Students can combine ANY combination of Performance Immersion courses from the BFA in Acting, Musical or Dance Theatre degree programs that are offered in a given semester as long as the prerequisites are fulfilled. A sample list of Performance Immersion course offerings and descriptions are listed here.

Acting: Play Reading

Actors will explore a variety of playwrights, periods, and styles through reading plays aloud. Discussions of play themes and elements will be combined with reading dialogue in order to challenge the actor's skills while broadening their experience with plays in their written form.

Acting: Alexander Technique

Introduction to the principles and practice of The Alexander Technique, a process of self-observation, experimentation, and change. Guided by verbal and hands-on cues, students prevent habits of tension that arise when they perform everyday activities. Students learn to move with more ease, and freedom.

Intermediate Acting: Audition Monologues

This course will provide actors the opportunity to create a "repertoire" of varied and contrasting monologues for audition and/or performance opportunities. Texts may range from classical to contemporary, comedic to tragic.

Intermediate Acting: Audition Techniques

Using a wide cross-section of scripts for stage, film, and television, the student will be introduced to a series of simulated audition experiences. Techniques for effective auditions will be explored through cold readings and/or call-back experiences.

Intermediate Acting: Voice Acting & Animation

This is an introductory course for students who have interest in what it means to be an animation voice talent. It will explore the acting skills, vocal skills, and techniques required to pursue a career in the voice acting/animation industry.

Intermediate Acting: Make-up Design and Application

Basic principals relating to stage make-up for an actor. Shading, contouring, highlighting, and use of proper materials will be components of this course. Make-up for roles requiring specific looks such as: animal, extreme age, naturalistic, and or special enhancements may be explored.

Improv I: Foundations

This course is designed to enhance and strengthen the student's range, imagination, and physical choices. The student is taught to interact spontaneously with fellow actors and to establish the foundations for a heightened sense of physical freedom.

Improv II: Techniques

Course work includes further development of kinesthetic and sensory awareness with advanced exercises in concentration and point of focus. The student will be instructed in making strong and intelligent choices with in the context of an ensemble and group. Problem solving, moment-to-moment interaction, and spontaneity are emphasized.

Improv III: Advanced Techniques

This course employs non-verbal scenes, sensory improvisation exercises, repetition exercises, verbal improvisation techniques, and scene work with improvisation foundations. The student is taught to play honestly within a visceral environment and to interact spontaneously with the needs and responses of fellow actors.

Advanced Improv: The Serial Story

Students will use Improvisation to create a "Soap Opera" or some other on-going story with established characters. The serial show will be created as a live performance within class and could possibly (based on class progress) partner with the film and television department to shoot "episodes" for weekly viewing on campus.

Advanced Improv: Long Form Performance Technique

Exploring the Long Form Performance technique known as the "The Harold" and/or Long Form Improvisation to create a 30-40 minute performance piece.

Stage Combat I: Unarmed

Students will be introduced to the concentrated study of basic and advanced unarmed stage combat techniques. The focus of study will be to develop the actor's awareness of body, movement, partnering as well as the safe, and effective techniques to create a process from which to execute a choreographed unarmed fight scene.

Stage Combat II: Single Sword

Students will be introduced to the art of single swordplay through the mechanics and techniques of footwork, choreography, as well as the history and development of the Western European Rapier. Through the continued study of these basic principles of stage combat, students will train to develop the concentration and focus required to execute a dramatic moment of illusionary violence with the sword.

Stage Combat III: Broadsword, Rapier & Dagger

Advanced stage combat techniques are developed through the study and use of Broadsword and the Rapier & Dagger. The focus here will be to apply all previously studied principles of stage combat and execute choreographed fights incorporating scenes from dramatic literature with a Public Performance.

Advanced Combat: Combat Battles

A variety of specialty and advanced combat training experiences are offered through workshops, classes, Showcase and Film production work. In the past these have included work with knives, whips, shields, mass battles, martial arts, firearms and fighting for film.

Advanced Combat: Theatrical Firearms Training

Students will develop and practice the basic awareness and knowledge of the use of theatrical firearms. Students will also be given firearms tactical training as it relates to actors playing roles required to carry, operate and fire weapons.

Film/TV: TV Hosting

This class will introduce students to the world of hosts and hosting through a combination of didactic lessons and course readings combined with hands-on performance projects. Students will not only develop an awareness of the responsibilities and role of a host in these various genres, they'll develop the practical skills critical to successful hosting technique.

Film/TV: Acting for the Camera III.

Devoted to furthering students understanding of truthful acting within the medium of the camera, this course will include acting as it relates to commercials, CGI, and/or advanced scene work. Expanding on the vocabulary used in previous semester's work, this course will utilize more complex camera shots, equipment, character work, and all elements that best prepare the student for careers involving acting for the camera.

Dance: Ballet

Beginner – An introduction to the fundamentals of ballet technique and vocabulary. Emphasis is placed on learning the elementary positions, characteristics, and movements of this highly stylized art form. Students acquire and/or develop an awareness and control of posture and body alignment.

Intermediate – A continuation of ballet technique training with an emphasis upon increasing technical proficiency, performance skills and aesthetics. Students acquire and/or develop an increased awareness and control of posture and body alignment.

Advanced – Advanced ballet training with a greater emphasis upon perfecting technique, performance skills, ballet vocabulary and varied styles. Students acquire and/or develop an advanced awareness and control of effective posture and body alignment.

Dance: Tap

Beginner – This course is a beginning exploration into rhythms and steps basic to the art form of tap dancing. Training includes musicality and performance skills as well as techniques. Students acquire an awareness and control of posture and body alignment.

Intermediate – This course will continue tap technique training with increased attention placed on musical phrasing and the use of space. More emphasis will be placed on increasing tap vocabulary and performing duet and/or solo work. Students acquire and/or develop an increased awareness and control of posture and body alignment.

Advanced – Advanced tap training with a greater emphasis upon perfecting tap technique and performance skills. An emphasis will be placed on relating to music, space, and style. Students acquire and/or develop an advanced awareness and control of posture and body alignment.

Dance: Jazz

Beginner – An introduction to the fundamental mechanics of movement in the jazz style. Emphasis will be placed on the development of jazz techniques, performing skills, and spatial relationships. Students acquire and/or develop an awareness and control of posture and body alignment.

Intermediate – A continuation of jazz technique training with increased attention placed on phrasing and the use of space. Students acquire and/or develop an increased awareness and control of posture and body alignment.

Advanced – Advanced jazz training with a greater emphasis upon perfecting jazz technique and style. Performance skills and audition skills are highlighted. Students acquire and/or develop an advanced awareness and control of effective posture and body alignment.

Dance: Modern

Beginner – An introduction to the fundamental mechanics of movement in the modern style. Emphasis will be placed on the development of modern dance techniques, performing skills, and spatial relationships. Students acquire and/or develop an awareness and control of posture and body alignment.

Intermediate – A continuation of modern technique training with increased attention placed on phrasing and the use of space. Students acquire and/or develop an increased awareness and control of posture and body alignment.

Advanced – Advanced modern dance training with a greater emphasis upon perfecting modern technique and style. Performance skills and audition skills are highlighted. Students acquire and/or develop an advanced awareness and control of effective posture and body alignment.

Dance: Body Conditioning

Rigorous exercises with emphasis on improved body alignment, strength, flexibility, control, coordination and breathing. A challenge to any performing artist.

Choreography for the Actor

This course is designed with the actor in mind as it explores a variety of dance styles, techniques and periods. Combinations may include swing, jazz, or contemporary dance styles ranging from the 1920's to today. Attention is placed on phrasing and an advanced use of spatial awareness, posture, and body alignment.

Ensemble Singing for the Actor

Students work with a director and choreographer to create characters for an effective musical theatre performance within a professional ensemble. Skill areas include exploring vocal choices through acting, singing harmony, movement and choreography, and building a character. Repertoire is chosen from shows that are frequently produced allowing the student to prepare for future ensemble auditions.

Advanced Voice Production & Speech: Dialects

Advanced dialect work designed to increase the actor's casting potential. In addition to dialect work, Voice Production, warm-ups, and overall vocal technique will be reinforced. Student may be assigned work based on skill level and/or assigned dialects.